

Sūrah 104

Al-Humazah

(The Fault-finder)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The *Sūrah*'s opening word, *al-humazah* (the fault-finder) also provides its title.

Period of Revelation

This is generally accepted as a Makkan *Sūrah*. In terms of its content and stylistic features too, it resembles early Makkan *Sūrahs*.

Subject Matter and Themes

This *Sūrah* denounces some moral vices that had afflicted the worldly minded, rich members of *Jāhiliyyah* society. These evils were recognized by everyone in Arabia and no one contested these being vices. The *Sūrah* describes the gruesome end of such despicable people in the Hereafter. The narration is so forceful and eloquent that listeners/readers are convinced of the end befalling such wretches. As such people are not instantly punished in this world

and are seen flourishing, it is inevitable that there should be the Next Life in which they should undergo punishment.

On reading this series of *Sūrahs*, from *al-Zilzāl* to this one, it becomes clear how the articles of Islamic faith and its moral code were presented before the Makkans. In *Sūrah al-Zilzāl* it is asserted that man's whole record of deeds will be given in his hand. It will accurately include all his deeds, good and bad, and large and small. *Sūrah al-'Ādiyāt* draws attention to the rampant chaos, violence and plundering then prevalent in Arabia. Such abuse of the powers granted by Allah constitutes great ingratitude. It is also declared that not only man's deeds, but also the motives behind these will be examined in the Hereafter. For the Lord knows well who deserves what recompense. *Sūrah al-Qāri'ah* projects the spectacle of the Last Day and warns man that his ultimate end will be adjudged on the basis of the weight of his deeds. *Sūrah al-Takāthur* reproaches the materialistic mindset which occupies men until their last breath with only worldly gains, pleasures of the flesh and lust for power. Men compete with one another in amassing riches. After warning against the dire consequences of such negligence, man is told that he cannot walk away free after having thoroughly enjoyed numerous bounties in this world. His Lord will call him to account for each of these – both how he acquired and how he utilized them. *Sūrah al-'Aşr* categorically declares that man, both as an individual and as a community, is in loss, if he does not have faith and good deeds to his credit. Society should reverberate with exhortations for truth and patience. Next in the series is the present *Sūrah* which portrays the character of a *Jāhilīyah* chief and poses the question as to why such a wicked person should not suffer loss.